

Message Text

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61/45

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SPM-01 IO-14 AID-20 IGA-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 DRC-01 EB-11

OMB-01 TRSE-00 /143 W

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O R 021055Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 5203

USSAG NKP THAI

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

PATMA FLD OFC UTAPAO THAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 3145

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - P A R A O N E

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, EAID, CB

SUBJECT: RICE AIRDROP

1. FOR APPROXIMATELY A YEAR THE C-130'S FROM UTAPAO HAVE BEEN AIR DROPPING RICE INTO TWO GKR ENCLAVES, TAKEO AND PREY VENG. THE AIR DROP REQUIREMENT NOW IS APPROXIMATELY 620 TONS PER MONTH. PREVIOUSLY THE RICE FOR THESE AIR DROPS WAS PURCHASED FROM THAILAND UNDER A PRESIDENTIAL WAIVER AUTHORITY, PERMITTING THE OFF-SHORE PROCUREMENT OF RICE. NOW THAT U.S. RICE IS MORE READILY AVAILABLE, HOWEVER, THE WAIVER AUTHORITY HAS LAPSED AND IT CANNOT BE RENEWED.

2. ATTEMPTS ARE NOW UNDERWAY TO CONTRACT FOR AN IN-COUNTRY AIR DROP OF RICE. UNTIL THE NECESSARY CONTRACTS ARE SIGNED, WE HAVE ARRANGED WITH THE GKR TO BACKHAUL RICE FROM PHNOM PENH TO UTAPAO ON AN INTERIM BASIS. WE ANTICIPATE THAT IN-COUNTRY ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN A MONTH. WE
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HAVE JUST BEEN ADVISED BY COL CARTER, USSAG NKP, THAT THAI

CUSTOMS WILL NOT ACCEPT THE ENTRY OF RICE FROM CAMBODIA INTO THE BASE AT UTAPAO. RICE SUPPLIES HAVE TWICE BEEN DELIVERED TO POCHENTONG AND HAVE NOT BEEN AIRLIFTED BECAUSE OF USSAG REFUSAL TO PERMIT THIS ACTIVITY. WE HAD ASSUMED THIS PROHIBITION WOULD APPLY TO RICE TRANSITING THAILAND BUT DID NOT BELIEVE THAT RICE THAT WAS FLOWN IN FOR SUBSEQUENT AIR DROPS WOULD ALSO BE AFFECTED. SUPPLIES AT UTAPAO WILL BE EXHAUSTED ON 6 MARCH. CONSUMPTION IS 105 M/T PER WEEK AT TAKEO AND 50 TONS A WEEK AT PREY VENG. THERE ARE NO RESERVES IN EITHER CITY.

3. THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN FULLY DISCUSSED WITH AMBASSADOR KINTER AND WINSHIP. IT IS URGENT THAT RTG APPROVAL BE GRANTED FOR THIS RATHER MODEST AMOUNT OF RICE TO ENTER INTO UTAPAO IN ORDER THAT THE RICE DROPS CAN CONTINUE. WITHOUT CONTINUED RICE DROPS, NEITHER TAKEO OR PREY VENG COULD SURVIVE. THE LOSS OF TWO PROVINCIAL CAPITALS IN THIS FASHION WOULD HAVE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES FOR CAMBODIA AND THE U.S. PRESENCE HERE.

4. WE REPEAT THAT THE ONLY INFORMATION WE HAVE TO DATE HAS COME FROM COL. CARTER, USSAG NKP, WHO HAS ALSO INDICATED MACHTAI INVOLVEMENT. WE HAVE HAD NO FORMAL OR INFORMAL CONTACT BY THAI GOVERNMENT.

5. URGENTLY REQUEST AMEMBASSY INVESTIGATE MATTER AND, IF IN FACT THERE IS FORMAL REFUSAL BY RTG, BEND EVERY EFFORT OBTAIN WAIVER FOR TEMPORARY RESUPPLY UTAPAO. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT BACKHAUL TO UTAPAO BEGIN NLT 5 MARCH 1974 IN ORDER SUSTAIN AIRDROPS TO TAKEO AND PREY VENG.
ENDERS

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